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Module: TEFL

Level: Master 1 Students

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Teaching the Skill of Speaking

I. Oral Communication Skills in Pedagogical Research

1. Conversational Discourse: Conversational discourse refers to the spoken exchanges between individuals, encompassing the structured yet dynamic nature of communication. It aims to accomplish pragmatic goals such as information sharing, relationship building, or problem-solving, all while adhering to established conversational rules like turn-taking and coherence. Sociolinguistic appropriateness plays a crucial role, as speakers must navigate cultural and contextual factors to ensure their language aligns with social norms. Additionally, the styles of speech, including formal or informal registers, and non-verbal communication cues, such as gestures and facial expressions, enhance the overall meaning. Conversational routines, like greetings or farewells, further establish patterns that facilitate understanding and engagement in dialogues.

2. Teaching Pronunciation: Teaching pronunciation is crucial for effective communication, involving phonetics, stress, rhythm, and intonation. Effective methods include focused drills, interactive practice, and real-life applications to improve speech flow. Students work on challenging sounds and the musicality of English through techniques like listen-and-repeat exercises, tongue twisters, and reduced forms to gradually enhance their skills and confidence in both casual and formal settings.

3. Accuracy and Fluency: Accuracy pertains to the correct use of grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, whereas fluency emphasizes smooth and spontaneous communication. Language learners should strive to balance both aspects. Fluency activities encourage quick expression, like speed talking, while accuracy tasks involve grammar drills and error correction. Integrating both methods in speaking practice enhances effective communication and minimizes mistakes.

4. Affective Factors: Affective factors in language learning, such as emotions, attitudes, and motivation, greatly impact a learner's willingness to engage in speaking activities and their confidence. High anxiety or fear of mistakes can impede effective speaking. To address these challenges, fostering a supportive classroom environment is essential, which can include collaborative activities, encouragement, and positive reinforcement to create a sense of belonging and lower speaking-related apprehensions.

5. **The Interaction Effect:** The interaction effect refers to how learners' participation in verbal exchanges can enhance their language acquisition. It emphasizes the importance of real conversations in learning, where the negotiation of meaning, clarification requests, and feedback occur. Engaging in interactive dialogues allows learners to practice their speaking skills in real time, receive immediate responses, and adapt their language use to fit the needs of their conversational partners. This dynamic process fosters deeper learning and the ability to manage communication challenges effectively.

II. Types of Spoken Language (Interpersonal and Transactional)

Spoken language is categorized into two broad types: interpersonal and transactional. Interpersonal language serves a social function where the primary goal is to foster relationships, share feelings, or engage in casual conversation. For example, greetings, small talk, and expressions of opinion are part of this category. Conversely, transactional language is more goal-oriented, focusing on transferring clear information or fulfilling a task, such as making requests or giving instructions. Recognizing these distinctions helps learners apply appropriate language strategies depending on the context.

III. What Makes Speaking Difficult

Several factors complicate the speaking process for learners. Clustering involves producing speech in meaningful phrases rather than individual words, which can be challenging for language learners to achieve. Redundancy, or the repetition of ideas, can also make fluency difficult, as students may hesitate to speak if they feel they are being repetitive. Reduced forms, such as contractions and colloquialisms, can confuse learners unfamiliar with informal speech. Performance variables like anxiety, rate of delivery, and the need for instant recall also present challenges. Understanding these obstacles can guide teachers in addressing them during instruction.

IV. Microskills of Oral Communication

Microskills are the fundamental components that enable effective oral communication. They are the specific, small-scale skills that contribute to a speaker's ability to articulate their thoughts clearly and engage meaningfully in conversations. Here are several essential microskills:

1. **Pronunciation:** This includes the correct articulation of sounds, syllables, and words in spoken language. Mastery of pronunciation is crucial for being understood and for the clarity of communication.
2. **Intonation:** Intonation refers to the variation in voice pitch while speaking. It can change the meaning of sentences, indicate questions, express emotions, and mark emphasis. Teaching students to use appropriate intonation can enhance their expressiveness and comprehensibility.
3. **Fluency:** Fluency involves the ability to speak smoothly and with little hesitation. It allows speakers to convey their ideas clearly without unnecessary pauses. Encouraging practice through conversation and speech activities can help learners develop fluency.

4. **Turn-Taking:** Effective communication requires the ability to know when to speak and when to listen. Understanding and executing turn-taking signals, such as pauses, gestures, or intonation changes, is vital for seamless conversation and maintaining engagement.
5. **Clarification:** This skill involves the ability to ask for clarification or to paraphrase what someone else has said. It enables speakers to confirm understanding and avoid miscommunication, fostering clearer dialogue.
6. **Paraphrasing:** This is the ability to restate what another person has said in one's own words. It shows understanding and can help reframe ideas, making conversations more productive and inclusive.
7. **Use of Discourse Markers:** Discourse markers are words or phrases that manage the flow of conversation (e.g., "well," "actually," "on the other hand"). They can improve coherence and cohesion in speaking, making it easier for listeners to follow the speaker's ideas.
8. **Asking Questions:** The ability to formulate and ask questions appropriately can drive a conversation forward, demonstrate interest, and clarify information. Understanding how to craft different types of questions (open-ended vs. closed) is essential for effective dialogue.
9. **Body Language and Non-Verbal Communication:** Non-verbal cues, such as gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact, play a critical role in communication. They can reinforce spoken messages, indicate engagement, or reflect emotions, influencing how messages are received.
10. **Emotional Intelligence:** Understanding and managing emotions during conversations can enhance interpersonal communication. This involves being aware of one's own feelings and those of others, allowing for empathetic and sensitive interactions.

V. Types of Classroom Speaking Performance

Classroom speaking performances can be categorized into various types, including imitative, intensive, responsive, transactional, interpersonal, and extensive monologues. Imitative speaking focuses on mimicking sounds or phrases, useful for developing pronunciation. Intensive speaking involves producing controlled utterances to practice particular language features. Responsive speaking requires students to engage in short exchanges based on prompts or questions. Transactional dialogues seek to accomplish specific objectives, while interpersonal dialogues prioritize relationship-building through conversation. Finally, extensive monologues enable learners to express thoughts fully on a particular subject, enhancing fluency and organization.

VI. Principles for Designing Speaking Techniques

When designing speaking techniques, it is important to consider several key principles. Encourage meaningful communication by integrating real-life contexts into speaking tasks. Create a supportive environment where learners feel safe to take risks and make mistakes. Balance fluency and accuracy, allowing students to practice both aspects simultaneously through various activities. Incorporate collaborative exercises that foster interaction among peers and utilize authentic materials to expose

learners to natural language use. Lastly, provide consistent feedback to help learners refine their skills and recognize areas for improvement.

VII. Methods for Teaching the Speaking Skill

1. **Communicative Language Teaching (CLT):** Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) emphasizes interaction and communication as vital components of language learning. It engages learners through meaningful activities that replicate real-life scenarios, such as role-plays and group discussions. For example, students might practice ordering food in a simulated restaurant or conduct interviews. The main principle of CLT is that authentic interaction is the most effective way to acquire language, boosting fluency and confidence in speaking.

2. **Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT):** Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) focuses on meaningful tasks as the basis for language learning. Students engage in activities that require them to use their language skills to achieve specific goals or solve problems, making the experience relevant and engaging. TBLT emphasizes task completion over language accuracy, promoting communication skills rather than solely grammar and vocabulary, which helps develop fluency and critical thinking.

3. **Process-Oriented Teaching:** Process-Oriented Teaching emphasizes the steps needed for effective speaking, guiding learners through preparation, organization, rehearsal, and feedback. By breaking the process into manageable parts, students gain clarity and confidence in their speaking abilities. This approach also encourages self-reflection, allowing students to identify areas for improvement as they progress.

4. **Drama and Role-Play:** Drama and role-play enhance speaking skills by engaging students in simulated real-life scenarios, like negotiations or customer service. These activities allow learners to practice English in a supportive, enjoyable environment, fostering spontaneous language use and risk-taking. This approach boosts confidence by offering low-stakes opportunities to experiment with language and develop conversational skills through active participation.

5. **Flipped Classroom:** The Flipped Classroom model redefines traditional teaching by shifting direct instruction to home, where students learn through videos or readings. In-class time is then dedicated to interactive activities and projects that allow students to apply their knowledge. This model encourages student ownership of their learning and enhances engagement in speaking practice, facilitating interaction and skill development.